

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 AF-06 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

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SAM-01 ARA-06 /083 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5877

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LOURENCO MARQUES

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

DIA WASHDC

CINCLANT NORFOLK VA

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LISBON 0725

FOR EMBASSY CAPE TOWN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, PO, AO

SUBJECT: CRESPO AND CARDOSO COMMENT ON ANGOLA

SUMMARY: MINISTER OF COOPERATION CRESPO AND FORMER HIGH COMMISSIONER TO ANGOLA ADM CARDOSO PREDICTED EARLY VICTORY FOR MPLA IN CONVERSATIONS WITH SENATOR BARTLETT. CRESPO FORESAW MPLA-DOMINATED GOVERNMENT INTEGRATING SOME UNITA ELEMENTS. CARDOSO STATED THAT US SHOULD WORK FOR COALITION BETWEEN UNITA AND MODERATE ELEMENTS IN MPLA. CRESPO BELIEVED THAT SOVIETS WOULD MAINTAIN
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POLITICAL, BUT NOT A MILITARY PRESENCE. CARDOSO BELIEVED THAT

SOVIETS WOULD RETAIN NAVAL AND AIR BASES. END SUMMARY.

1. PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR ANGOLA ON JAN 31, SENATOR BARTLETT MET SEPARATELY WITH COOPERATION MINISTER VICTOR CRESPO AND VICE CHIEF OF NAVAL STAFF ADM LEONEL CARDOSO, THE LAST PORTUGUESE HIGH COMMISSIONER IN ANGOLA. EMBOFFS ACCOMPANIED SENATOR BARTLETT AND STAFF MEMBER RUTH AT BOTH MEETINGS. BOTH CRESPO AND CARDOSO RECEIVED SENATOR CORDIALLY. HIGHLIGHTS OF COMMENTS BY TWO GOP OFFICIALS FOLLOW.

2. CRESPO'S COMMENTS:

(A) CURRENT SITUATION: WITH HELP FROM SOVIET "TECHNICIANS" AND CUBAN COMBAT TROOPS, MPLA WOULD SOON -- PERHAPS WITHIN MONTH -- BE IN EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF NATIONAL TERRITORY. FNLA HAD BEEN VIRTUALLY DESTROYED. UNITA WAS IN DISARRAY.

(B) CUBAN PRESENCE: THE CUBANS HAVE NOT BEEN WELL RECEIVED IN ANGOLA, PARTICULARLY IN LUANDA. THE PROBLEM IS NOT THAT THEY ARE RACISTS BUT RATHER THAT THEY CONDUCT THEMSELVES "LIKE ANY OTHER INVADING ARMY." THEY HAVE MORE MONEY THAN MPLA SOLDIERS AND ARE INSENSITIVE TO LOCAL TRADITIONS. CRESPO SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE CUBANS MIGHT BE REPLACED BY NIGERIANS, BUT ONLY AFTER MPLA VICTORY WAS ASSURED.

(C) USSR PRESENCE: DESPITE THE HEAVY USSR INVESTMENT IN ANGOLA, IT WAS UNLIKELY THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD SEEK A MILITARY PRESENCE THERE "SIMILAR TO THAT IN SOMALIA." THE USSR, HOWEVER, WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY MAINTAIN A STRONG POLITICAL PRESENCE.

(D) USG ROLE: USG HAD MADE A SERIOUS MISTAKE IN BACKING FNLA/UNITA. THE USG SEEMED TO HAVE A PREDILECTION FOR BACKING LOSERS. THE FNLA HAD NO POPULAR SUPPORT; IT WAS RACIST AND TRIBAL; IT WAS DISCREDITED FOR ITS CLOSE ASSOCIATIONS WITH THE SOUTH AFRICANS. UNITA WAS MORE RESPECTABLE, BUT "ITS TIME HAD PASSED."

(D) FUTURE PROSPECTS: WITH SOVIET AND CUBAN HELP, THE MPLA WAS LIKELY TO WIN ON THE GROUND WHAT IT COULD NOT OBTAIN AT THE BARGAINING TABLE. ONCE THE REINFORCED MPLA HAD ASSERTED

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ITS DOMINATION MILITARILY, IT WOULD PROBABLY AGREE TO SOME FORM OF "GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY." SUCH A GOVERNMENT WOULD BE MPLA-DOMINATED BUT WOULD INCLUDE SOME UNITA ELEMENTS -- THOUGH CERTAINLY NOT SAVIMBI AND THE TOP LEADERSHIP -- AND WOULD PERMIT LIMITED "ADMINISTRATIVE AUTONOMY" IN AREAS WITH STRONG UNITA SYMPATHIES. POLITICAL DECISIONS WOULD, HOWEVER, BE MADE BY THE MPLA.

3. CARDOSO'S COMMENTS:

(A) CURRENT SITUATION:

-- MPLA WAS UNLIKELY TO BE STOPPED, ALTHOUGH FIGHTING
WOULD GET TOUGHER IN SOUTH.

-- PROSPECTS OF MPLA AGREEING TO COALITION WITH UNITA WERE
NOT GOOD; CARDOSO HAD UNSUCCESSFULLY URGED SUCH A COALITION
ON NETO MANY TIMES.

-- WHILE UNITA HAD MAJORITY OF POPULAR SUPPORT, ITS TROOPS
WERE NO MATCH FOR CUBANS.

-- SAVIMBI'S THREAT TO CONTINUE GUERRILLA WAR AGAINST MPLA,
IF CARRIED OUT, WOULD REPRESENT ONLY INEFFECTIVE HARASSMENT.

(B) SOVIET AND CUBAN PRESENCE:

-- SOVIETS WILL RETAIN NAVAL AND AIR FORCE BASES AFTER WAR,
ALTHOUGH BASES MAY REMAIN UNDER NOMINAL ANGOLAN CONTROL;

-- CUBAN TROOPS AND MOST SOVIET ADVISERS WOULD LEAVE ONCE
FIGHTING STOPPED BECAUSE PEOPLE WOULD NOT ACCEPT LARGE
FOREIGN PRESENCE.

-- CUBAN TROOPS ARE ALREADY DISLIKED DUE TO ABUSES COMMON TO
OCCUPYING ARMIES.

-- FIDEL CASTRO'S ASSERTION THAT CUBAN TROOPS WERE SENT
IN RESPONSE TO SOUTH AFRICAN INVASION WAS RIDICULOUS. WHEN
CUBANS ARRIVED, ONLY SOUTH AFRICAN UNITS PRESENT WERE THOSE
PROTECTING DAM PROJECT IN SOUTH.
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LISBON 0725

FOR EMBASSY CAPE TOWN

-- MPLA LEADERS WOULD NOT ACCEPT NIGERIAN REPLACEMENTS FOR
CUBAN TROOPS FOR FEAR NIGERIANS WOULD NOT LEAVE.

(C) USG ROLE AND FUTURE PROSPECTS:

-- IT IS TOO LATE TO HELP UNITO/FNLA THROUGH ANYTHING BUT
IMMEDIATE AND MASSIVE -- "UP TO PHANTOMS" -- MILITARY AID;

-- "US HAD BET ON THE WRONG HORSE IN THE FNLA" WHICH HAS
NO POLITICAL BASE, EVEN IN TWO NORTHERN PROVINCES.
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-- BARRING MASSIVE ASSISTANCE, ONLY COURSE LEFT OPEN WAS TO
WORK FOR POLITICAL SOLUTION EMBRACING UNITA AND MODERATE
ELEMENTS IN MPLA.

-- SEVERAL MPLA LEADERS, INCLUDING JOAO CAETANO AND MINDEF
HENRIQUE CARREIRA, WERE MODERATE AND MIGHT BE DISPOSED TO
NEGOTIATED SOLUTION.

-- ONLY COMPETENT FNLA LEADER IS N'GOLA KABUNGU WHOM MPLA
HAS FREQUENTLY SOUGHT TO WIN OVER.

4. COMMENT: SIMILARITIES IN CRESPO'S AND CARDOSO'S VIEWS
PROBABLY REFLECT ACCESS TO SAME INTELLIGENCE REPORTS. DIFFERENCES
REFLECT CRESPO'S GREATER SYMPATHIES FOR MPLA. CARDOSO'S EXPLANATION
OF THESE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION WAS REFLECTED IN HIS PARTING
COMMENT: "CRESPO KNOWS A LOT ABOUT MOZAMBIQUE."
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